

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, 7-11, 13-15, 18, 21, 22, 24-26, 28, 29, and 31 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 11, 15, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, and 31 have been amended hereby. Claims 6, 12, 23, 27, and 30 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added by these amendments. Favorable reconsideration and entry of this Amendment is requested.

In response to the restriction requirement, Applicants elect Group I. - Claims 1, 5-15, 18, 21, 22, 24-26, 28, 29, and 31, without traverse, for further prosecution on the merits. Claims 23, 27, and 30 have been cancelled hereby, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 24, 28, and 31 have been amended to change the recitation “the access information” to --the access destination information--, thereby providing proper antecedent basis to the recitation. Withdrawal of the objection to Claims 24, 28, and 31 is solicited.

Further, Applicants admit the inherent requirement pointed to by the Examiner in the Office Action in paragraph 9.

That is, in the field of IP networks, DHCP is well known, which dynamically assigns an IP address on the network. Even if a private address or MAC address is set to a client, the client notifies its MAC address to a DHCP server, and the MAC address can be transformed to a global address to identify the client on the Internet.

There are situations where an IP address already assigned to a terminal is changed to a different IP address, after the terminal is disconnected from the network, and reconnected to the network.

Thus, Applicants admit that the terminal information needs to be re-registered every time a terminal of the intended information sharing group changes its IP address.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding objection to Claims 1-20 be withdrawn.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of Claims 1, 11, 15, 18, 21, 22, 24-26, 28-29, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0239454 (“*Kawashima*”).

Kawashima was filed in the U.S. on June 23, 2005, and has a foreign priority date of January 7, 2005. In contrast, the present application was filed in the U.S. on July 31, 2001, and has a foreign priority date of March 12, 2001.

Kawashima has matured into U.S. Patent No. 7,239,873.

Applicants point to an error printed on the front page of the publication of *Kawashima*, indicating that it is a division of application No. 08/999,308, filed on Dec. 29, 1997. A review of the USPTO PAIR system and the issued patent shows that this is clearly not the case.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that *Kawashima* is not a proper reference under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) against the present application. Withdrawal of the rejection of the claims based on *Kawashima* is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of Claims 1, 6, 9-15, 18, and 21-31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,760,917 (“*Sheridan*”).

Regarding Claim 1, the Examiner contends that an information distribution device corresponds to the central image server and the storage 20 of *Sheridan*, a plurality of terminal information distribution devices to the distributed customer/end users 40A-40N, and a content server to the distributed processor scanners 2A-2N.

The Examiner has indicated that “a distribution request including a Uniform Resource Location as access information” is taught by *Sheridan* [e.g. col. 5, lines 23-27]”, however. the

Uniform Resource Location indicated in col. 5, lines 23-27 of *Sheridan* is an electric address for the hub station 201 in Fig. 1 or the central image server and storage 20 in Fig. 3, and it does not relate to addresses for processor scanners 2A-2N.

Thus, *Sheridan* fails to teach or suggest that the information distribution device, which allegedly corresponds to central image server and storage 20 of *Sheridan* comprises “a first receiving portion receiving, from one terminal device belonging to said group, a distribution request including a Uniform Resource Locator as access information, which is required for accessing the distribution information stored in the content server and distribution destination information,” as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Further, *Sheridan* fails to teach or suggest that the information distribution device comprises “a second receiving portion accessing said distribution information stored in the content server, based on said access information included in the distribution request received by said first receiving portion from the one terminal device, and receiving the distribution information accessed.” At best, *Sheridan* shows that processor scanners 2A-2N, or allegedly the content server send image data to the central image server and the storage 20, or allegedly the information distribution device, as indicated in Fig. 3 (Figure Key); however, *Sheridan* does not indicate a second receiving portion (of the information distribution device) accessing said distribution information stored in the content server, based on said access information included in the distribution request, as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

As for the claimed first transmitting portion of the information distribution device, the Examiner points to *Sheridan* at “col. 5, lines 31-64; e.g., the distribution server pushes low resolution photographs to the mail boxes belonging to the terminals of the group.” In spite of such contention, such low resolution photographs are used to identify the digital image set to

which the third party has been granted access (col. 5, lines 32-35). Then, the third party transmits to the hub station 201, the access identification, along with a request to access the image set in accordance with one of the granted access rights (col. 5, lines 48-53).

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the low resolution photographs or thumbnail images of *Sheridan* do not correspond to the claimed “first transmitting portion transmitting said distribution information stored in said second storage portion to said one terminal device and the specified other terminal devices according to the distribution destination information.”

The Examiner has further stated that:

Sheridan does not specifically teach having a third receiving portion receiving a bill of charges from a device billing charges for the distribution information when the distribution information is chargeable; and a second transmitting portion transmitting said bill of charges received by said third receiving portion either to the one terminal device having transmitted the distribution request or to a telecommunications carrier to which the one terminal device subscribes.

and then, asserted that:

However, as in photo processing service, it is clear that user who submitted original films to Sheridan's distributed processor scanner (2A-2N, Fig. 3) must be charged for the original processing cost and optionally for distribution fee. As such, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have used Sheridan's distributed processor scanner to issue a bill the central image server (20, Fig.3), which contains the user's information and other subsequent image printing activities and relay appropriate billing charges to the user (who submitted the original films) because Sheridan's central image server is the center of user contact through which it may facilitate the billing process.

In spite of such assertion, *Sheridan* describes “Methods which are executed in the system of FIGS.3 and 4 will now be described. First, the user will deposit their undeveloped exposed film 48 at any one of the processor- scanner stations 2A to 2N which the user finds most convenient. At the selected processor-scanner station the user requests the type of processing and hardcopy images.... These requests are made by checking appropriate boxes on a film processing envelope into which film will be deposited.... As described earlier, each scanner system 6 will generate from each negative set 52, a corresponding digital image set signal for each image set signal and will also generate an associated identification signal for each image set signal.” (col. 9, lines 31 to 51).

Further, in the Figure Key of Fig. 3, ID’s indicated by a dotted arrow are shown as connected directly between processor-scanner 2A-2N and user 40A-40N.

From the above discussion, it should be clear that *Sheridan*’s distributed processor-scanner issues a bill for development of a film directly to the user who requests the development, and not through the central image server storage.

Independent claims 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, and 29 recite similar features as the ones discussed above with respect to Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claims 1, 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, and 29, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentably distinct over *Sheridan*.

CONCLUSION:

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. And further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited. At a minimum, this Amendment should be entered at least for purposes of Appeal as it either clarifies and/or narrows the issues for consideration by the Board.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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